

PATRICK LEAHY
OFFICECOMMITTEE
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND
FORESTRY
APPROPRIATIONS
JUDICIARY

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4502

Bi

RELEASED IN FULL

December 22, 1998

The Honorable Curtis W. Kamman
Embassy of the United States
Bogota, Colombia
APO AA 34038

Fax: 571-315-0811

Dear Ambassador Kamman:

I recently received information that a Colombian Air Force unit that may receive U.S. counternarcotics aid, Comando Aéreo de Combate No. 2, has been implicated in a December 13th attack on civilians in Santo Domingo, a village near Tame, Arauca.

Reports indicate that on December 12th, the Colombian Air Force sent aircraft to pursue armed guerrillas believed to belong to the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) near Santo Domingo. There is information that upon hearing gunfire outside of Santo Domingo, the town's residents gathered at a central point in their village to demonstrate that they were not guerrillas. When night fell, they reportedly illuminated themselves with portable lights to show that they were indeed civilians.

Eyewitnesses report that the following day, Colombian military aircraft, including at least one OV-10A Bronco and four helicopters, flew over the village and dropped three explosives -- killing at least seventeen civilians, including five children, and wounding twenty-four others. Residents acknowledge that FARC guerrillas were in the rural area outside of Santo Domingo, however they deny allegations by the Colombian military that FARC guerrillas were in the village.

I am told that in a December 15th press interview, Air Force Commander General Héctor Fabio Velasco admitted that OV-10A aircraft had fired rockets on the area. I am also told that eleven of the OV-10A aircraft the Colombian Air Force possesses have been provided by the United States, and there is speculation that the aircraft used in the December 13th incident may have been fitted with rocket launchers, munitions, spare parts, or other U.S. equipment.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DONALD A. JOHNSTON
DATE/CASE ID: 29 MAY 2002 200102988VERMONT OFFICE: COURT HOUSE PLAZA, 100 MAIN STREET, BURLINGTON 05405-0526
FEDERAL BUILDING, ROOM 200, MONTPELIER 05602-0200
OR DIAL TOLL FREE 1-800-633-6123
SENATOR LEAHY@LEAHY.Senate.GOV
PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

UNCLASSIFIED

I would appreciate the following information in classified or unclassified form:

- Does the Comando Aéreo de Combate No. 2 receive U.S. counternarcotics aid and, if so, what equipment has it received?
- How many OV-10As does the Colombian Air Force possess, and how many of these were provided by the U.S.?
- What information does the Embassy have regarding allegations that the aircraft used in the December 13th incident may have been provided by the U.S. and/or fitted with U.S. equipment?
- What information does the Embassy have regarding reports that explosives were dropped on the village?

I would appreciate any other information you can provide about this matter, including what efforts are being made to investigate it.

Thank you for your assistance. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator